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THE 1965 CAFAHOSIC HOUSING CONFERENCE REPORT. (HOLLY KNOLL, CAFAHOSIC, MAY 26-28, 1965).

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NATIONAL COMMITTEE AGAINST DISCRIM. IN HOUSING

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DESCRIPTORS- *HOUSING DISCRIMINATION, GHETTOS, *INTEGRATION METHODS, *MINORITY GROUPS, *HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES, LEGISLATION, LOW RENT HOUSING, MIDDLE INCOME HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT, URBAN SLUMS, PUBLIC HOUSING, NEGRO HOUSING, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, STATE GOVERNMENT, CITY GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, HOUSING INDUSTRY, *CONFERENCES, NEW YORK CITY, BOSTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, BALTIMORE, VIRGINIA

DECIDING THAT THE PROBLEMS OF THE RACIAL GHETTO ARE AT THE CORE OF THE CURRENT URBAN AMERICAN CRISIS, THIS CONFERENCE EXAMINED AND EVALUATED CURRENT ACTION PROGRAMS TO ACHIEVE INTEGRATED HOUSING AND EXPLORED NEW WAYS TO SPEED MINORITY GROUPS OUT OF GHETTOS INTO ALL URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS. THE CONFEREES CITED SEVERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DISCUSSIONS--(1) THERE SHOULD BE AN INCREASE IN THE SUPPLY OF LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME HOUSING IN WHITE NEIGHBORHOODS, (2) REHABILITATION PROGRAMS SHOULD BE INSTITUTED IN OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS ABOUT TO BECOME SLUMS, (3) GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS SHOULD INSURE THAT PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS ARE LOCATED ON SITES WHICH WILL FURTHER INTEGRATION, (4) STANDARD MUNICIPAL SERVICES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE IN NONWHITE NEIGHBORHOODS, (5) PROFIT-MAKING SHOULD BE TAKEN OUT OF GHETTO REAL ESTATE DEALINGS BY ENFORCING HOUSING CODES, AND (6) THE NEGRO SHOULD BE EDUCATED TO BELIEVE THAT GOOD HOUSING IS INTEGRATED HOUSING. PRESENTLY, OPEN HOUSING PROGRAMS, WITH THE SUPPORT OF FAIR HOUSING LEGISLATION, ARE OPERATING IN BALTIMORE, BOSTON, NEW YORK CITY, SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, WASHINGTON, AND ELSEWHERE. THESE PROGRAMS OFFER PROFESSIONAL AID AND INFORMATION TO PEOPLE SEEKING HOUSES AND HELP IN THE FORMATION OF FAIR HOUSING COMMITTEES IN WHITE NEIGHBORHOODS. IT WAS AGREED THAT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES SHOULD TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN ENCOURAGING OPEN HOUSING, BUT UNTIL THEY DO SO PRIVATE AGENCIES MUST MAKE THIS EFFORT. THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING, CENTER FOR FAIR HOUSING, 323 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016, FOR $0.50. (NH)

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The 1965 Capahosic Fair Housing Conference

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CONFERENCE REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The 1965 Capahosic Housing Conference

Sponsored by the

NATIONAL COMMITTEE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING

and the

PHELPS-STOKES FUND, INC.

Holly Knoll, Capahosic, Virginia
May 26-28, 1965

PROGRAM

Conference Chairmen

ALGERNON D. BLACK
Chairman of the Board, NCDH

FREDERICK D. PATTERSON
President, Phelps-Stokes Fund, Inc.

(Conference participants, with agency affiliations are listed on page 20.)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 1965

5:30 p.m. Reception and Dinner

7:30 p.m. THE EXPANDING RACIAL GHETTOS OF URBAN AMERICA
Chairman: MR. BLACK
Opening Remarks: DR. PATTERSON
Film: The Letter and the Spirit
Discussion

THURSDAY, MAY 27

9:00 a.m. EVALUATION OF OPERATION OPEN CITY
Chairman: JACK E. WOOD, JR.
Presentation: EUNICE GRIER
Commentators: ALEXANDER J. ALLEN
BETTY HOEBER
Discussion

12:30 p.m. Luncheon

2:00 p.m. EVALUATION OF OTHER COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS
Chairman: EDWARD RUTLEDGE
Presentations: PAGET L. ALVES, JR.
MARGARET FISHER
CHARLOTTE MEACHAM
SADELLE R. SACKS
MARGERY T. WARE
EUGENE R. WOLFE
Discussion

5:30 p.m. Social Hour and Dinner

7:30 p.m. PROGRAM OF THE NCDH CENTER FOR FAIR HOUSING
Presentation: MR. WOOD
Discussion

8:00 p.m. BASIC ELEMENTS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS TO ACHIEVE RESIDENTIAL INTEGRATION
Chairman: ROBERT L. CARTER
Presentations: LEO BOHANNON
MORRIS B. FLEISSIG
MRS. GRIEP
BOOKER T. MCGRAW
Discussion

FRIDAY, MAY 28

9:00 a.m. THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE INDUSTRY AND FOUNDATIONS IN EXPANDING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF "OPERATION OPEN CITY"-TYPE PROGRAMS
Chairman: I. N. P. STOKES
Presentations: J. LAWRENCE DUNCAN
CHRISTOPHER EDLEY
D. JOHN HEYMAN
JOSEPH MCGRATH
NATHANIEL H. ROGG
Discussion

12:30 p.m. Luncheon
Summary Remarks: DR. PATTERSON
MR. RUTLEDGE

2:30 p.m. Adjournment

INTRODUCTION

Residential segregation, the most pervasive influence for maintaining a racially-separated society, is at an all-time peak in cities and towns across the United States. In Los Angeles, 82 per cent of the Negro population would have to disperse in order to achieve a racially-balanced community; in Omaha, 92 per cent; in Boston and Detroit, 84 per cent; in New York City, 79 per cent; in Portland, 77 per cent; in Dallas, 94 per cent.

The racial ghetto, the most disruptive consequence of housing discrimination, lies at the heart of the current crisis in urban America. The vast majority of Negro citizens are relegated to life in the ghetto, with its segregated, inferior schools; overcrowded, high-cost slums; sparse cultural and recreational facilities; high rates of unemployment; and the hopelessness, despair and bitterness spawned by its invisible walls—walls which reach far beyond its physical boundaries.

It is true that in recent years many Negro families of predominantly middle-class status have moved into many formerly restricted neighborhoods, largely the direct or indirect result of anti-discrimination laws which have been adopted by 20 states and 28 cities. Also, in 1962, President Kennedy issued a limited Executive Order calling for equal access to federally-aided housing. Voluntary fair housing groups are working for integration in more than 1,000 communities in 30 states—a phenomenal growth from 18 in nine states only six years ago. The National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing and its affiliates, with the cooperation of foundations such as the Phelps-Stokes Fund, have expanded the battle to end the exile of Negroes and other minorities in their native land.

Yet, despite these and other gains, we are faced with the harsh reality that racial ghettos are relentlessly expanding in American cities, large and small. Most of the laws are weak and timidly enforced; the

narrow Executive Order has scarcely made a dent on segregation; organizations working for fair housing are handicapped by government foot-dragging, industry bias, community apathy, and a critical lack of funds.

The 1965 Capahosic Housing Conference was convened to measure progress in housing integration against the magnitude of residential segregation, to stand gains alongside losses, to examine our present course, and to explore new directions for breaking up the racial ghettos and achieving an integrated society based on justice, dignity and mutual respect.

What is needed is a national commitment to wipe out racism, and a massive national mobilization to do it. This report outlines many of the elements necessary to this monumental and imperative task. Failure to act now will insure repetition of the Los Angeles type of rebellion in ghettos over the nation.

ALGERNON D. BLACK
Chairman of the Board
National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing

FREDERICK D. PATTERSON
President
Phelps-Stokes Fund, Inc.

October 1965

The Capahosic Conference was made possible by a grant from the Phelps-Stokes Fund, Inc., a philanthropic organization which includes among its concerns the housing conditions of low-income families in New York City.

THE CAPAHOSIC CONFERENCE

THE 1965 CAPAHOSIC HOUSING CONFERENCE was held under the sponsorship of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing (NCDH) and the Phelps-Stokes Fund. Its purpose was two-fold: first, to examine and evaluate on-going community action programs aimed at achieving integration in housing; second, to explore the development of new affirmative approaches and techniques to encourage and accelerate the movement of Negroes and other minorities from racially-concentrated areas into all sections of the nation's cities and their suburbs.

Among the 24 participants were representatives of the housing industry, government, philanthropic foundations, and intergroup relations practitioners who are directly involved in various types of local programs in the housing field.

The two-day meeting was held at Holly Knoll, Conference Center of the Robert Russa Moton Memorial Foundation, at Capahosic, Virginia.

THE EXPANDING RACIAL GHETTOS OF URBAN AMERICA

The opening session of the Conference took a hard look at the desegregation record of recent years—a record in which minor gains must be measured against tremendous losses. All evidence, it was noted, shows that an increasing number of Negro families (most of them middle-class) have moved into formerly all- or predominantly-white neighborhoods in their quest for better housing, better schools and better community facilities. As a consequence, the number of racially-mixed communities is growing in almost every section of the country.

On the other hand, racial ghettos in every city and in many older suburban communities are expanding, and new ones—both low- and middle-income—are forming.

Discussion at this session focused on the broad social and economic factors which serve to maintain and extend housing segregation, such as housing supply, quality and cost; site selection for public housing

projects and other government-aided developments; the outward movement of whites to suburbia; and voluntary segregation.

The following crucial needs were cited during the discussion (A pertinent comment by a participant is quoted under each item.):

- A sharp increase in the supply of low- and middle-income housing located especially in areas which are predominantly white. "We must get housing people can afford in all neighborhoods . . . can't have real dispersion without it." There was agreement that the rent subsidy program incorporated in the 1965 Housing Act can be an important tool in this area.
- Extensive rehabilitation programs in older neighborhoods which are declining but are not slums, with special effort to make them attractive to middle-class families. "These neighborhoods could give us a supply of good housing for years to come, and special amenities should be provided to entice whites back to the cities, in this type of housing as well as elsewhere."
- Government at all levels must be pressed into seeing to it that public housing projects are located on sites which will further integration instead of extending segregation. "Public housing ghettos are as bad as private housing ghettos."
- Municipal services must be brought up to standard in neighborhoods in which nonwhite families reside. "Lack of service by the city gives support to distorted charges as to the cause of deterioration."
- The profit must be taken out of the ghetto by strict code enforcement and by tackling the vested interests. "When codes are really enforced, owners of deteriorated housing are usually disposed to sell. When the pot of gold is running out, the owner wants out too."
- Ways must be found to launch and continue a massive educational program to "convince Negroes that good housing is also integrated housing."

As the session closed, an observation by one participant seemed to summarize its overall conclusion: "An adequate and dispersed supply of standard housing at all income levels is absolutely essential. But unless we end racial discrimination, more supply will mean more segregated housing."

OPERATION OPEN CITY

A principal feature of the Capahosic Conference — the subject of the second working session — was an in-depth analysis of "Operation Open City," a demonstration program initiated by NCDH in January 1964 in New York City. A major objective of this pilot project was to develop more effective methods for bringing about widespread dispersion of Negro and other minority-group households, and to establish guidelines for similar programs in other communities across the country. Administration of the Open City project was transferred to the Urban League of Greater New York in the fall of 1964, under a cooperation agreement with NCDH.

Preparatory to the Capahosic Conference, NCDH commissioned an evaluation of Operation Open City by Eunice Grier, a leading research specialist with broad experience in the housing and intergroup relations fields. Mrs. Grier's study served as a basic discussion paper for the Conference.

At the beginning of this session, it was pointed out that in the past efforts to achieve housing integration focused largely on creating a climate of understanding and good will among the residents of white neighborhoods, and placed too little emphasis on overcoming the deep-rooted negative effect of the historic segregated housing market on nonwhites.

The Plan of Action

Operation Open City is aimed at devising specific program activities to encourage Negroes and other minorities to take advantage of expanded housing opportunities throughout an entire city and its environs. It is testing the hypothesis that more rapid dispersion will result if information on available housing at reasonable cost in good neighborhoods is broadcast to minorities, and a "helping hand" is provided by some residents of those neighborhoods.

Thus, the Open City program operates in two major directions. The first is beamed toward the minority community through massive distribution of detailed and current information on available units for sale or rent in predominantly-white communities, the characteristics of those communities, and the provision of some counseling on sound homeseeking practices. Virtually every medium of communication to reach nonwhite families is being used on a continuing basis.

In attempting to saturate the minority communities with information on housing opportunities, the aim is not only to draw registrants who are actively in the market for homes into the Open City office. An equally important objective is to "sell" Negroes generally on moving into the mainstream to take advantage of good housing buys in neighborhoods outside of the ghettos and beyond their fringes.

The second direction of the Open City program has been to identify and involve residents of such white neighborhoods who are committed to integration and who will form the nucleus of a fair housing committee in their locality.

These voluntary groups perform two vital functions. First, they assemble and furnish the Open City office with a detailed profile of each community which undertakes to provide all of the information persons looking for a home may want or need. The profiles are reproduced by Open City and, together with other promotional materials, are broadcast throughout the minority communities.

The fair housing group's second role combines salesmanship with support. Through Open City, the group establishes personal contact with interested homeseekers — or with registrants who think they *may* be interested. Fair housing committee members then show their neighborhood and discuss its advantages; they may accompany the homeseeker to real estate offices; when deemed advisable, they supply "checkers" to assure that any discriminatory action is quickly detected and appropriate measures are taken to end it. In some cases, fair housing group members supply evidence to substantiate charges of discrimination under New York's fair housing laws. If the family moves in, these local residents try to insure that the move is made routinely and that the family's life in the community is normal in all respects.

Early Results

During the first 15 months of Operation Open City's existence, more than 600 minority-group households sought its services and were sent into the mainstream of New York's housing market. Represented among the registrants were every income and occupational level, every family size and structure, and a wide variety of housing preferences and needs.

At the end of March 1965, when Mrs. Grier completed her analysis, Open City was working with some 450 families still in search of homes. By that time, a total of 63 Negro families were known to have

obtained living quarters through the direct assistance of the program. The New York Urban League reported that by May 15 the number had risen to 80. The number of families motivated by the Open City project who moved out on their own is, of course, not known. The League reports, however, there are indications the program has indirectly influenced a number of moves.

[By the end of September 1965, Open City's director reported the program had had 1,100 applicants, and had directly aided 175 families in securing homes.]

Among those who secured homes through Open City, 63 per cent had family incomes between $5,000 and $10,000, and at least 18 per cent were in the low-income group, including several families receiving aid from the Welfare Department. Household size ranged from very large to single persons, 50 per cent being composed of two or three persons.

Housing was obtained in each of New York City's five boroughs. Eighty-five per cent of the families rented accommodations; 9 per cent bought cooperative apartments; and 8 per cent purchased houses.

Over 90 per cent of the families secured low- and moderate-cost housing in New York City's expensive market: 27 per cent for less than $101 per month; 41 per cent from $101 to $125; and 23 per cent from $126 to $150. Four per cent are paying more than $200 per month since relocating.

As noted above, sparking the formation of new fair housing groups is an integral and continuing part of the Open City program. At the time the project was launched, there were 15 of these groups in New York City, a number of which were inactive for all practical purposes. By the end of March 1965, there were 30 active fair housing committees in the five boroughs of the city.

Mrs. Grier pointed out that this record was made despite two critical handicaps the program faced from its inception: lack of funds and a serious shortage of staff. Operation Open City was planned, developed and manned by two volunteers with professional qualifications, working in consultation with NCDH officials and, later, with officials of the New York Urban League. No funds were available for salaries during the first year the program was in operation. At the time of the Capahosic Conference, Open City still had a staff of two professionals, with the addition of one clerical assistant.

Use of Fair Housing Legislation

Residents of New York City may file complaints of discrimination under either the state or city fair housing law, the coverage of these measures being almost identical, with each applying to some 95 per cent of the housing supply.

Clients of Operation Open City filed 90 formal complaints under the laws between January 1964 and April 1, 1965. The fact that virtually all of the complainants chose to use the city ordinance may be due, in part, to a cooperative agreement negotiated by the New York City Commission on Human Rights, under which Open City staff members (and staff of certain other private agencies) have been trained and are authorized to take formal complaints for referral to the commission. Thus, the homeseeker does not have to make arrangements — often inconvenient, difficult and more time-consuming — to go to the commission office to register a charge of discrimination.

As of April 1, the city commission had "satisfactorily" closed 52 of Open City's cases. But only 16 of the complainants got the housing they sought or a comparable unit. Four more families were offered accommodations, but had made other arrangements while their cases were being processed. In 32 "satisfactorily" adjusted cases, the unit was no longer available at the time of settlement, complainants were put on waiting lists for the next vacancy, and respondents agreed to cease their discriminatory practices. Sixteen of the 90 complaints were still pending, and 12 had been dismissed by the commission or dropped by the complainants.

The Grier Evaluation

Important conclusions and recommendations growing out of Mrs. Grier's analysis and evaluation of the Open City project included the following:

- Operation Open City is showing promising results and should be continued and expanded. The actual reach of the project is broader than statistics alone can measure.
- By working with equal intensity in both the nonwhite and white communities, Open City has incorporated in its pilot plan of action the most promising techniques and community resources. Although few of the techniques are new, the methods employed to saturate the minority community with information about housing opportunities have been refined and highly organized.

- New York City's construction boom of recent years has not only increased the new housing supply, but has released many good older units for new occupants. Open City clients have benefited from both categories. The city must continue building toward an adequate housing supply at every price level in all sections, employing every possible means — new construction, rehabilitation, the use of rent supplements, and by an imaginative housing policy geared to the creation of attractive, integrated neighborhoods throughout the city.
- Both the state and city commissions must sharpen their procedures for ending discrimination and must take affirmative action to promote integration, moving beyond the traditional case-by-case complaint process toward fulfillment of the intent of the fair housing laws.
- Two great weaknesses in implementation of the fair housing laws are: 1) failure to insure the right of homeseekers to look at housing in which they may be interested; and 2) delay in resolution of complaints, during which time the housing at issue frequently is taken off the market.
- It is crucial that the highest officials of both state and city give genuine support to agencies of government which are administering human relations programs. Without such backing, the commission staffs are crippled.
- NCDH should make the Operation Open City program known on a national basis so that community groups throughout the country may draw from it those factors and adapt those techniques which will enhance their local efforts to break down ghettoized housing patterns and achieve integrated communities.It should continue close observation and study of the Open City project. As numbers build up, careful review should be made of experiences with specific segments of the market, especially with selected income groups.

[*Operation Open City: Evaluation of an Experimental Program in New York City, with Suggested Guidelines for Other Communities,* by Eunice Grier, is available from NCDH. 48 pages; $1.00 per copy.]

Conference Examination of Operation Open City

One of the participants raised the question as to whether programs such as Operation Open City are not properly the function of government. The consensus was that, while government has a major responsibility to take effective action to extend integration in housing, as in

all aspects of community life, the role of the private agency is crucial. One participant commented: "We can't indulge ourselves by thinking we can afford the time or the frustration in this period of crisis to wait for government to come through on this obligation."

The point was made that fair housing legislation offers the only real protection the Negro homeseeker has, and that government enforcement of this protection is extremely lax.

Regarding involvement of real estate brokers in the Open City program, Urban League representatives reported that a major drive to gain the cooperation of leading members of the industry had recently been launched.

The suggestion was made that Open City's publicity stress the idea that "quality education is found in integrated neighborhoods." The concern of Negro parents about the standard of education provided for their children, it was felt, can become one of the most powerful motivating forces for speeding dispersion.

Finally, although it was recognized that programs such as Operation Open City involve many of the elements of case work, there was agreement that such pace-setting projects have a far-reaching impact in changing the deep-rooted customs which have grown out of the historic segregated housing market. Open City-type programs can not only help meet the housing needs of an increasing number of Negroes; and can not only create new integrated neighborhoods throughout a community; but, more importantly, can serve as a catalyst to stimulate the independent movement of increasing numbers of nonwhite homeseekers into the general housing market with a demand for equal treatment and equal service.

OTHER COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The third Conference session was given over to an examination of other professionally-staffed programs to achieve housing integration which are being conducted by local and national organizations in communities over the country. The programs studied were widely representative of various problems and experiences, differences in program emphasis, and specialized activities.

Greater Boston

Fair Housing, Inc. (FHI), of Boston, is a listing service which

grew out of the fair housing committee movement in that metropolitan area. It serves as a clearinghouse for such committees in 67 suburban towns and communities and three in the city proper. The volunteer services of individuals have been enlisted to fill the gap in those in-city areas where no cooperating groups exist. FHI reported heavy resistance to its continuing efforts to spark the formation of in-city fair housing committees.

With the assistance of the 70 local groups in the area and its volunteer aides, FHI maintains an up-to-date central listing of houses and apartments available for sale or rent throughout Boston and its suburbs. Listings are obtained from a few cooperative realtors; individual property owners; regular checks of the classified ads; and identification of housing covered by the Massachusetts fair housing law.

FHI's offices are conveniently located in the heart of Boston's Negro ghetto, and the service it offers homeseekers has been extensively publicized in the minority community. Many of its clients come on their own initiative; others are encouraged to register by families who have secured homes through the program; others are referred by civil rights organizations and by the Welfare Department. Lower-income families usually seek assistance because of an emergency situation, such as displacement by urban renewal projects or condemnation of the property where they are living.

Although FHI services homeseekers of all income levels, its executive director reported on a special project aimed at meeting the needs of low-income families. In September 1963, FHI received a demonstration grant from the Housing and Home Finance Agency for a two-year project aimed at opening new housing opportunities in the general market for families in the low-to-moderate income group. Applicants under this project fall into three categories: Low Income Group A (based on public housing standards); Low Income Group B (based on income requirements for nonprofit 221(d)(3) housing — see note below); and Other Income (applicants with annual incomes above $6200 for households with two members and up).

Note: Section 221(d)(3) of the National Housing Act is designed to increase the supply of lower-income housing by authorizing the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to insure below-market interest rate mortgages on new and rehabilitated rental or cooperative housing. Only nonprofit bodies, cooperatives, limited dividend corporations, and certain public agencies may borrow to sponsor housing provided under this program, and occupancy is limited to families in the low-to-moderate income group.

At the time of the Capahosic Conference, the low-income demonstration was in its 20th month. It was reported that the second year was showing a marked increase in the relocation of these families from areas of racial concentration into the general market.

From September 1963 to March 1965, FHI directly assisted a total of 118 families of all income levels in securing homes in predominantly-white neighborhoods, city and suburbs. Ninety-five of the families moved to 45 suburban communities; 23 to other sections of the city. About 40 per cent of the 118 families were in the lower-income group.

FHI found attitudes generally good toward the new neighbors in the suburbs. However, in sections of the city with heavy nationality-group occupancy considerable resentment was shown toward the newcomers, and intensive community follow-up was done. In no case has an untoward incident occurred.

Most of the complaints filed under the Massachusetts fair housing law from the Boston area stem from Fair Housing, Inc. During the six months preceding the Capahosic Conference, FHI filed 40 cases. Twenty-six of the complainants got the housing they sought; 8 cases were dismissed for lack of probable cause; and 6 were still pending. "Checkers" are used extensively, and they frequently put down deposits (provided through FHI resources) to hold the housing unit available until an adjustment can be made, either by conciliation or under the law. A volunteer lawyer, usually provided from a panel formed by the American Jewish Congress, represents each complainant before the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (official enforcement agency for the state fair housing law) in all cases filed through FHI.

A Washington Program to Maintain Integration

Neighbors, Inc., is a community organization working in an exceptionally attractive 250-block integrated area in Washington, D. C. Its program has three major focuses: neighborhood stabilization, cooperation with other agencies in promoting an open housing market on a metropolitan-wide basis, and community development.

The executive director of Neighbors, Inc., told the Conference that the program began at a time of extensive panic selling, and that its activities have "transformed a state of social chaos into a genuine sense of community." Many white families have been attracted back to a section of Washington which was undergoing rapid racial change.

Neighbors' community activities cover a wide range: enforcement of housing and zoning codes; neighborhood planning ("city planning on a small scale"); special programs for youth, particularly those who need recreation and jobs; a well-organized and extremely active garden club; a "Junior Neighbors" to involve young people in many aspects of community action; a play reading group; an annual art show.

The net loss of white population from this highly desirable section of Washington has been slowed markedly, but has not been reversed. The Neighbors representative told the conferees that one of the most difficult problems to cope with has been the steady decrease in the proportion of white children in schools in the area.

It was pointed out that, as is true in all stabilization programs, the basic need is an open housing market which permits the free movement of nonwhite households into all sections of the metropolitan area.

The San Francisco Bay Area

The Council for Civic Unity of San Francisco, which operates a comprehensive human relations program, has long given emphasis to housing. In early 1965, the Council, in cooperation with fair housing groups spread over the large Bay area, established a central listing service. The area covers nine counties, with six older cities. Negroes form about 16 per cent of the population within the cities; about 2 per cent in nearby suburban sections; the proportion dropping to a half of one per cent in the area's outer suburbia.

Suburban housing costs are high, with 50 per cent of the homes priced above $30,000, and only 5 per cent under $20,000.

At the time of the Capahosic Conference, the listing service had been in operation approximately five months. It had received open occupancy listings of 167 apartments and houses in San Francisco and 250 homes for sale in suburban communities. A total of 174 minority-group families had registered for rental housing in San Francisco. After 400 referrals, 30 of these families were assisted in relocating in neighborhoods removed from areas of racial concentration. Only a few listing service clients were interested in suburban housing.

Participants at the Conference were told that the cost factor is crucial for dispersion to the San Francisco suburbs. The Council is urging fair housing groups throughout the area to become actively involved in the housing programs of their respective communities,

and to press for more moderate-cost units, such as those provided under the 221(d)(3) program.

The Council's executive director said that unless suburban communities expand their housing supply to include middle- and lower-income dwelling units, the opportunity for dispersion created by extensive decentralization of industry in the Bay area will be frustrated. San Francisco is building a new rapid transit system which soon will provide a network of fast, convenient transportation to most outlying areas. Thus, Negroes with jobs in suburban plants will not only be able to continue living in the central city and commute to work, they will be forced to do so if housing they can afford is not available near their places of employment.

Metropolitan Baltimore

Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc., (BNI) is the only fair housing committee in the country which has among its affiliates the Mayor and the City Council, the local real estate board, an organization representing the financial power structure of the city, leading religious institutions of the three major faiths, the principal civil rights agencies, and neighborhood fair housing groups.

Formed in 1958, BNI was the direct outgrowth of a resolution adopted at a conference held under the auspices of the Greater Baltimore Committee, an organization of leading business figures who were concerned about the increasing exploitation of integrated, middle-class neighborhoods by panic-peddling real estate men, and the growing loss of middle-income families from the city. The resolution recognized "the legitimate demands of the Negro community for adequate housing on an open occupancy basis," and called for the establishment of a private agency to work on the problem "with imaginative action on a continuing basis."

Financial backing was provided by the founders, and the new agency was charged with six basic responsibilities: fight the panic peddlers, taking legal action and sponsoring legislation, if required; promote the sale and rental of housing on an open occupancy basis; promote the advantages of urban living; search for ways to finance the sale of older homes to compete with new development housing; organize neighborhood groups to combat panic selling; enlist the support of all responsible elements in the community.

In its early stages, the main thrust of the BNI program was its effort to create stability in racially-integrated neighborhoods. In recent years, emphasis has been given to the promotion of integrated housing on a metropolitan-area basis, including support of proposed fair housing legislation, both city and state. Neither Baltimore nor Maryland has a nondiscrimination housing law.

Several hundred Negro families have been assisted in securing homes in predominantly white neighborhoods and, by the early summer of 1965, BNI could account for more than 200 white families who had moved into racially-integrated areas through its program.

The Urban League's Operation Equality

Operation Equality is a program of the National Urban League designed to supplement the housing efforts of League affiliates over the country. It centers on four principal activities: the development of consolidated lists of available housing covering a metropolitan area; a central clearinghouse for homeseekers; referral services for homeseekers; and consumer counseling.

Initiated several months before the Capahosic Conference, the program was launched in the League's Eastern Region with announcement of the publication of a list of 276 apartment developments and private homes which were available, by law or by choice, on an open occupancy basis. More than 1,000 copies of the housing list were distributed over the region.

At the time of the Conference, listings of available housing units totaled 398, and the program had directly assisted 89 minority-group families in securing homes on the open market.

The National Urban League's associate director for housing cited the work in Bergen County, N. J., as a typical example of how Operation Equality functions. The housing committee of the local League in that area, manned by trained volunteers, meets every two weeks to offer service to minority-group families who are looking for homes. An average of 10 families seek assistance at each session. After consultation with the League's housing aides, the family selects the houses or apartments which may meet its needs, resources and desires. Arrangements are made for inspection, and the housing aides follow through. This may entail meetings with real estate brokers or developers, conferences with landlords or owners, use of the New Jersey fair housing law, or other action.

Operation Equality works closely with local fair housing groups and with the housing programs of the American Friends Service Committee (see below). Also, it was reported that the American Jewish Congress has organized a panel of lawyers to provide home-seekers with legal services, and that the National Conference of Christians and Jews is helping with neighborhood stabilization programs. A cooperating panel of Negro and white real estate brokers was being formed.

The National Urban League's associate director for housing told participants that Operation Equality was already underway in six of the League's local affiliates, and that plans were well along for expansion to offices in other regions of the country.

The American Friends Service Committee

The housing programs of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) have pioneered in working directly at the community level to achieve integrated patterns of residence. At the Capahosic meeting, the AFSC national housing representative, reporting a sharp increase in activities and staff during the past year, told the conferees there were then eight on-going metropolitan programs.

In Boston, where for a number of years this national agency provided staff and services to stimulate the formation and development of a network of local fair housing groups in suburban communities (see Greater Boston, above), the AFSC program is now concentrating on expanding housing opportunities for low-income families.

In Chicago, one of the oldest of the AFSC programs, HOME (Housing Opportunities Made Equal) has been a pace-setter among listing and referral services. Also in Chicago, staff assistance was being provided for the North Shore Summer Project, in which 50 college students were being recruited to work with local residents in a crash program during the summer of 1965 to establish the practice of equal treatment and equal service for Negro customers by realtors in Chicago's restricted North Shore communities.

The AFSC Metropolitan Washington Housing Program provides a wide range of services for five area fair housing groups, and gives special emphasis to "buyer encouragement" projects, aimed at stimulating greater movement of minority-group families into the general market in their quest for homes. It was reported that more than 170

Negro families had recently moved into Washington's Maryland and Virginia suburbs, with the assistance of AFSC and the local fair housing groups.

In New York City, the Metropolitan Association of Fair Housing Committees is being provided with offices, staff and program direction. There are about 150 of these local voluntary groups in the Greater New York area.

In Dayton, Ohio, the AFSC program is concentrating on three small cities — Xenia, Ohio, and Muncie and Richmond, Ind. — and is linking together fair housing and fair employment practices. In Pasadena, the emphasis is on suburban housing and schools; and in San Francisco, the program is focusing on opening broad housing opportunities for families affected by a large urban renewal project.

THE NCDH CENTER FOR FAIR HOUSING

At the fourth session, the NCDH associate executive director outlined the types of services the NCDH Center for Fair Housing is offering to more than 1,000 voluntary fair housing committees working in 30 states and to other community groups. These include consultation on program development; technical assistance on problems connected with urban renewal and other housing and planning activities of government and private industry; field visits; conferences which bring together volunteers and professionals; a clearinghouse for information and sharing experiences, particularly through the "Fair Housing News Exchange," a regular feature of the NCDH publication, *Trends in Housing;* and providing a comprehensive selection of literature.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

This session then moved on to develop the following basic elements of positive action to advance residential integration, re-emphasizing some of the conclusions drawn at the opening session of the Conference:

- Government at all levels must adopt an affirmative policy for integration, and must promote an imaginative housing supply, including adequate low- and moderate-cost units dispersed to achieve economic as well as racial diversification in neighborhoods.

- The Federal Government must set its housing policy straight. The Executive Housing Order has not had, and cannot have, any significant impact on segregation, given its limited scope and inadequate provisions for implementation. The Order should be expanded immediately to cover all federally-aided housing, new and old, and the mortgage lending activities of commercial banks and savings and loan associations which are chartered, supervised, and whose deposits are insured by the Federal Government. The President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in Housing should be strengthened to insure affirmative and vigorous implementation of an expanded Executive Order.
- Comprehensive fair housing laws should be adopted by states and cities throughout the country. Enforcement agencies should not wait for complaints, but should take positive action to achieve the goal of these laws.
- There must be greater involvement of the housing industry in efforts to achieve equality of opportunity. The larger business community should use its fullest influence to bring discriminatory elements in the real estate industry into line.
- The nation's suburbs must be opened, and amenities must be provided by central cities to attract the return of whites. Urban renewal programs could play a major role in achieving both of these objectives.
- A massive educational program must be undertaken among both Negroes and whites, opening a dialogue with the community as a whole to counteract the forces of society "which have conditioned whites not to want their restricted neighborhoods broken and blacks not to want to break into them." Mutual trust and respect must be built.
- Civil rights forces must take a more urgent and militant stand on housing, moving this root issue into a priority position.
- The voluntary fair housing committee movement must be supported and extended. Programs should be constantly measured and refined.
- Public interest groups must give greater attention to the development of an overall strategy; long-range, comprehensive planning; and more effective coordination of their efforts.

GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY AND FOUNDATIONS

Discussion at the final Conference session dealt with the role and responsibility of government, the housing industry and philanthropic foundations in expanding the reach and effectiveness of private agency programs aimed at ending discrimination and segregation and building an integrated society. The following points emerged:

The Role of Government

The command of the Constitution and the responsibility to undo past wrongs place a heavy obligation on Government to support programs such as Operation Open City and other fair housing efforts. Federal, state and local government agencies should see to it that staff members at all levels are committed to equality of opportunity. Government programs and policies must be coordinated — for example, an urban renewal project can stymie a school integration effort. If governments would join in comprehensive metropolitan planning, nondiscrimination requirements would have a broader impact on the entire area. Public interest groups must constantly remember that government acts when pressure becomes irresistible.

The Role of the Housing Industry

Many leaders of the housing industry have accepted the fact that the national climate is changing, and favor extension of the Executive Order so that one rule will apply to all. Small operators are most apt to be fearful of integration. An increasing number of industry people will support nondiscrimination; fewer will promote integration. Hence, Operation Open City-type programs are likely to receive only limited support from the industry. The 1965 Housing Act, with its provision for rent supplements, and the establishment of a Department of Housing and Urban Development, should encourage industry efforts to achieve equal opportunity in housing.

In discussing the movement of the general American business community toward support of equality of opportunity, several participants commented on moves in that direction by members of the building and lending industries. However, it was generally conceded that the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) is representative of those elements in the industry which hold to the most backward civil rights position. Reports from California indicated that the NAREB-supported anti-fair housing referendum campaign caused

a sharp increase in racial tensions in that state. The campaign resulted in voter approval at the 1964 election of Proposition 14, a constitutional amendment aimed at wiping out the state's anti-discrimination housing laws for all time. The measure is being challenged in the courts.

Across-the-board expansion of the Executive Order was considered even more urgent in view of NAREB's national strategy to use the referendum process for repealing and preventing fair housing legislation.

The Role of Foundations

Foundations are concerned with supporting programs which appear to offer the best techniques in a given field, or pioneering experiments which may develop the best techniques. Often they are interested in making grants to stimulate philanthropy — such as a grant to stimulate development funds for a housing construction program, or to supply technical assistance to groups interested in providing housing.

With the enormous competition for foundation funds, the public image and record of accomplishment of organizations seeking support are extremely important. Generally, organizations will find it advantageous to have among their board members some well-known persons with whom foundation officials identify. Presentations should be simple, direct, and as uncomplicated as possible, and should give a clear, well-organized description of goals and program activities.

Programs such as Operation Open City appear to have a good potential — one of the important considerations when applications are before foundations.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Sessions at the Capahosic Conference were marked by an urgent concern about the slow pace of housing integration and the rapid expansion of racial ghettos. While laws against discrimination can set the ground rules for fair housing practices, racial barriers persist even in areas with the strongest laws.

Most important, however, was the conviction that the nation must now and in the coming years seize the opportunity it rejected during the great building boom of the 1940's.

In closing remarks, the NCDH executive director pointed out the

country is verging on another period of tremendous activity in housing construction. With an exploding population and the need to rebuild cities, new construction in the next 25 years is expected to approach the total number of dwelling units in the present housing stock. Thus, once again a rare opportunity is at hand, enhanced by a more favorable climate than in years past, for breaking up the racial ghettos and achieving more rapid dispersion of minority families to all sections of cities and suburbs.

Racially-integrated residential patterns, it was stressed, could have developed in relatively normal course during the 1940's — if Federal policy had supported integration instead of segregation; if state and city governments had geared their housing operations to an open society; if, as today, 92 states and cities had had laws or policies against discrimination; if 1,000 local fair housing committees had been working in 30 states; if housing programs had been in existence which reflected the intensive activity of those now being conducted by such agencies as the American Friends Service Committee, the National Urban League and the local organizations represented at the Conference; and if the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing had been organized to serve as "stimulant, catalytic agent and clearinghouse," to provide technical and program assistance, develop new techniques, influence government policy, and promote a favorable climate of public opinion over the nation.

Had these factors been present in the years following World War II, it was suggested, today's racial crisis in urban America might well have been avoided.

Because of the great potentials that lie ahead, sponsors of the Conference agreed that they would examine the feasibility of convening annually at Capahosic to evaluate programs and explore new methods which will lead toward fulfillment of the goal of a decent home for every American family in a suitable integrated living environment.

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The National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, formed in 1950, is an affiliation of 39 major religious, civil rights, labor and civic organizations which seek to remove housing restrictions based on race, creed or national origin. Its aim is to help bring about conditions, through community action and education, in which every American family can secure a decent home in a suitable integrated living environment.

NCDH's work is beamed toward every segment of society: government, industry, labor, educational and religious institutions, civic organizations, and the individual citizen. Its activities include consultation and technical guidance; fact-finding, informational services, publication and distribution of educational materials; local, regional and national conferences; exploration and experimentation to develop new and more effective techniques for achieving an open housing market.

The NCDH Center for Fair Housing serves as a clearinghouse for more than 1,000 voluntary fair housing committees working in 30 states, providing a wide variety of services and program assistance to these and other community groups.

Trends in Housing, the NCDH bimonthly publication is the only national periodical devoted exclusively to the housing-intergroup relations field and is widely used as a standard resource.

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"Operation Open City: Evaluation of an Experimental Program in New York City, with Suggested Guidelines for Other Communities," a companion pamphlet to this conference report, has been published by and is available from NCDH. $1.00 each.

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